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Panoptic Vision: Disjuncture, Transgressions, and Imagination in Laila Marrakchi's Film

Rock the Casbah

Touria Khannous

Abstract

This article focuses on Laila Marrakchi's film *Rock the Casbah* (2013), which reflects the exchange between global and local cultural and sociopolitical ideologies of a new Morocco. The film highlights the contradictions of globalization as it occurs through disjuncture. Arjun Appadurai's theory of the world in motion and "a world of flows" provides a relevant framework for this analysis. The article uses Appadurai's notion of "disjuncture" as a theoretical framework to discuss the dynamics and interrelationships involved in the protagonist's movement between Western mediascapes as a filmstar and her Moroccan family's local context. Appadurai's conceptualization of globalization is crucial for understanding the inherent disjuncture between the homogeneity of media representations and the local heterogeneity of Morocco. One aspect of the film represents the reality of a changing, glocalized Morocco. Another engages with Western media tropes in order to reveal the false representations of reality that are often depicted in Western films. The film's panoptic vision reveals the power structures present in both the local and global contexts, inspiring the viewer to imagine new identities and to be more aware of glocal possibilities.

Moroccan women filmmakers such as Laila Marrakchi construct a particular model of Moroccan cinema emerging from a global perspective.¹ Such a perspective is enhanced by their connection to Europe and the United States, their multinational production, as well as by the significant attention their films have drawn at international festivals. Most contemporary Moroccan women filmmakers enjoy international funding and have international connections, as this is the only way they can produce their films. What they also share is professional

¹ In his essay "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema," Andrew Higson (2000) examines if Benedict Anderson's theory of the nation is relevant for investigating national cinemas. Higson argues that an understanding of national cinema needs to take into account more transnational aspects of cinematic production, since the communities imagined by cinematic techniques tend to be transnational.

marginalization and a common project of solidifying a woman's gaze and claiming subjectivity, as they struggle against the sexist ideologies that control their filmic productions both at home and abroad. Despite the relative circulation of their films, Moroccan women filmmakers remain marginalized because of the hegemony of Hollywood constructions of spectatorship and distributions of film, which is true for practically all filmmakers outside Hollywood.² The circulation of their films in the digital age has been mainly aided by different media and platforms such as Amazon and Netflix (Caillé, 2016, p. 72). The category "Moroccan women's cinema," however, is very broad and does not communicate important factors such as generational issues and other differences in contexts and locations. For example, Valérie Orlando has noted the difference between Moroccan filmmakers living at home and those in the diaspora. She argues that, "Young audiences have emphatically supported international MRE [Marocain résident à l'étranger] productions because they associate them with what they think is most important: connection, not only to their own country, but to the outside world" (Orlando, 2011, p. 39).

This article focuses on Marrakchi's film *Rock the Casbah* (2013), which highlights the changes in Moroccan society and culture that have happened since the 1990s shaped by the sociocultural, economic, and political forces of globalization. Being part of the diaspora, Marrakchi enjoys a unique vantage point as a commentator from both inside and outside Morocco. My use of the term "diasporic" in describing Marrakchi is framed by cultural theorist Stuart Hall who defines diasporic cultural producers as those who adopt in their work a "diaspora aesthetic" and "diaspora identities" "which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew through transformation and difference" (Hall, 1995/2006, p. 438). In this sense, the term diaspora refers not necessarily to Marrakchi's physical movement from a place, but also to the unconventional ways in which she represents the reality of a new Morocco which is often perceived by conservatives as "unconventional."

Marrakchi also fits the framework of *cinéma-monde*, a concept that has been used to describe emerging transnational francophone cinema from former French colonies. Florence Martin has argued that the "translocal" and global funding of *cinéma-monde* constitutes "a de-orbiting from" France, "since we are no longer dealing with postcolonial films ... with France as the main pull, but rather with a reconfiguration of transnational teams for a local/translocal/transnational collaboration of people, and movements of ideas and languages that are de-centered,

² With regards to Moroccan women's cinematic production, I would like to suggest that we can read their films drawing on certain feminists of color's frameworks pertaining to class, race, and ethnicity. This intersectional approach will allow us to consider racial, gendered, and cultural hegemony in film criticism. Despite these filmmakers' relative wide circulation, only few scholars study their films, with the exception of Francophone scholars such as Valerie Orlando, Suzanne Gauch, and Florence Martin, among others, who only work on non-Hollywood films. My views echo those of bell hooks who notes that film theory has erased the cultural productions of women of color when she points out that "Feminist theory rooted in an historical psychoanalytic framework that privileges sexual difference actively suppresses recognition of race" (hooks, 1992/2003, p. 214).

de-orbited, free” (Martin, 2016, p. 473). Thus, it would be safe to label Marrakchi as a *cinéma-monde* cineaste whose film *Rock the Casbah* draws in global and local parameters. It uses the international languages of *cinéma-monde*, which permeate films from former French colonies, including Morocco, all while decentering hegemonic languages and narratives. Brian Edwards has argued that since the 1980s, Moroccan cinema has adopted American models against the French model because the American model has proven to be freer and far from domination (Edwards, 2007, p. 292). Marrakchi appropriates the tools of American cinematic styles not only to free herself from French domination but also to counteract Hollywood’s misrepresentations and false images. *Rock the Casbah* begins with the tunes of the 1940s Hollywood musical “On the Road to Morocco,” thus squarely setting the referential mood of the film. While, at first glance, it contains many familiar elements of Hollywood movies, including an upbeat Hollywood-style narrative, a closer reading readily reveals serious elements of critique. The film mixes melodrama, which is marked by sensational themes and suspense, with humor. It also employs a fantastical ghost played by Omar Sharif who offers commentary on the actions of his family in the style of a Greek Chorus. The use of Arabic, French, and English in the film has significant implications. The relationship between the use of French and the influence France held in Morocco is called into question. Moroccan characters are not only bilingual, but also understand English. Their use of French is a consequence of French colonialism, but their understanding of English is more related to polycentric multiculturalism and a decentering of France. The film then can be interpreted as being informed by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam’s (1994) theory of polycentric multiculturalism which “is about dispersing power” (p. 48), thus de-centering authority and foregrounding multilingual and global spaces.

Marrakshi’s film is reminiscent of other films about globalization such as Alejandro Iñárritu’s diasporic *Babel* (2007), which displays an array of languages but no dominant language, thus contributing to lack of communication across borders. Both *Rock the Casbah* and *Babel* highlight global connections combined with disconnection and exclusion.

The Plot and Sub-plots

Well-financed, *Rock the Casbah* is polished, demonstrating impressive and rich color designs. The setting is the beautiful estate of Sophia’s father Moulay Al Hassan, a well-off businessman in Tangier who benefited from economic globalization. Yet, the beautiful façade hides a world of violence, incest, and severe punishments. The film interweaves two different narrative strands that take place in two different parts of the world (the United States and Morocco) in a way that highlights global connectivity. The film consists of a main plot and two sub-plots. The main plot centers on Sophia’s immigration from Morocco to the United States to become a Hollywood movie star, at the price of being typecast as a terrorist. Sophia is a diasporic migrant who, as an actress, only plays roles involving violence and immobility. Her privileges in Morocco, however, are a result of her father’s

wealth, which has made it possible for her to immigrate to the United States and initiate a career in Hollywood.

The first sub-plot revolves around the dead father who has a large presence on the screen, often commenting on his funeral and interacting with Sophia's son, Johnson, who he has not met prior to his death. Moulay Al Hassan introduces himself to the audience as a businessman who has just passed away. His death prompts the gathering of his family members to honor the three-day mourning period. The audience hears Moulay Al Hassan observe, "The old man on the table, the body, is me. I died yesterday of a heart attack ... There was no announcer to prepare me for it. ... But fortunately, as our saying goes: The dead rule the living." Hearing the dead patriarch talk about what he is seeing, the filmmaker is making him omnipresent and a charismatic presence through his commanding gaze. His wife is worried that he will reappear and reproach her for mismanaging the funeral. His daughter Kenza refuses a cigarette for fear he is watching. In Foucault's (1977/2012) words, the father is a "panopticon," a symbol of the disciplinary power of surveillance (p. 196). The dead father is an observer who can oversee everything and everyone; each person is seen by him but they, themselves, are limited in what they see. What the film reveals from outlining the history of Moulay Al Hassan's surveillance and punishment is a shift from a bodily spectacle, where the dead body is seen by all family members, to the dead man as all-seeing and all-knowing, even after his death. Moulay El Hassan's "gaze is alert everywhere," which renders his family "a segmented, immobile, frozen space" (Foucault, 1977/2012, p. 195). Through the lens of the panopticon, different layers of narratives unfold in the film.

In the second sub-plot, the film's rich estate makes clear the gap between Morocco's poor subalterns and the global elite who have benefited from flows in globalized neoliberalism. To further dramatize such divisions, the film tells the story of Zakaria, the son of the family servant, who falls in love with Leila, the daughter of Moulay Al Hassan, who embodies the wealth and privilege that Zakaria has been denied. The details of their love story provide the context of the spectacles and dramas that later unfold in the film. Their love relationship ends in tragedy as Leila commits suicide when banished to London by her father and forced to have an abortion. The tragic side of the relationship between the two lovers is tied in the film to the new relationship that almost developed between Zakaria and Sophia. At the end, the film provides a vision of a new world beyond the gap between wealth and poverty when Zakaria learns that he is Moulay Al Hassan's biological son and thus set to inherit half of his father's fortune. Thus, we see at the funeral how the camera now captures a different image of the dual worlds, as Zakaria and his mother pose for a family picture with the rest of Moulay Al Hassan's family members. Although far from perfect, world order is also restored in another happy ending when Sophia reconciles with her American husband.

Rock the Casbah echoes Marrakchi's earlier film *Marock* (2005), which also focuses on the vast gap between the world of wealth and privilege and the world below. It portrays an unconventional relationship between a Jewish boy and a Muslim girl. Both films, through stunning scenes and diverse perspectives, make manifest the complex movement of global capital, products, peoples, and ideas.

Critical responses to Marrakchi's films

Critics of Marrakchi have focused mainly on the global aspect of her films, as well as the impact of globalization on gender roles, without taking into account her subtle critiques of globalization. Brian Edwards discusses the cultural choices in her film *Marock* (2005). For Edwards, the circulation of American cultural products in Marrakchi's film *Marock* promotes a Hollywood-like product that becomes the dominant narrative. Edwards describes *Marock* as a Hollywood teen romance that "exhibits the circulation of an American look, which is doubled by the film's interest ... in American commodities" (Edwards, 2016, p. 165). However, such reading overlooks the complexities that characterize the process of globalization. American culture has permeated Morocco via Western media, but its consumption, as Stuart Hall (1997) notes, is "a process of profound unevenness" (p. 33), which can generate a sort of defensive assertion of local cultural identities. The consumption of American cultural products is not necessarily to be equated with the Americanization of local culture. In this regard, Edwards questions "the ways in which American cultural products circulate through the world and what the meaning of their transnational circulation portends for U.S. hegemony (both political and cultural)" (Edwards, 2016, p. 22).

My reading of *Rock the Casbah* draws from cultural studies more than film studies, particularly critical globalization theory. Through this lens, the film highlights the contradictions of globalization as it occurs through disjuncture. Arjun Appadurai's (1996) theory of the world in motion and "a world of flows" (p. 4) provides a relevant framework for my analysis. Appadurai argues that globalization involves five *scapes* or *disjuncture* that occur in global contexts which are usually more manifest in the developing world than in the West. These are *ethnoscapes*, by which he refers to the mobility of people; *mediascapes*, by which he refers to the global flows of images produced by a variety of media such as film and television; *technoscapes*, by which he means the dissemination of technology across borders; *financescapes*, which refer to the global flows of finance, and *ideoscapes* by which he means the global flow of ideologies such as freedom and human rights (Appadurai, 1996, p. 35). The relation between these scapes is marked by disjuncture, separation, and dislocation rather than unity. I will use Appadurai's notion of "disjuncture" as a theoretical framework to discuss the dynamics and interrelationships involved in Sophia's movement between Western mediascapes as a filmstar and her Moroccan family's local context. Appadurai's conceptualization of globalization is crucial for understanding the inherent disjuncture between the homogeneity of media and the local heterogeneity of Morocco.

The "Glocal" in *Rock the Casbah*

The term "glocal," which is related to Appadurai's notion of disjuncture, represents the tension between the local and the global in Marrakchi's film, thus providing a new space for a new identity that is neither limited by local values nor by the stereotypes perpetuated by Western media. The term glocal was first used by sociologist Ronald Robertson when he stated during a 1997 conference that glocalization "means the simultaneity—the co-presence—of both universalizing

and particularizing tendencies" ("Glocalization," n.d.). An *Encyclopedia Britannica* entry further explains glocalization as constituting "a challenge to simplistic conceptions of globalization processes as linear expansions of territorial scales. Glocalization indicates that the growing importance of continental and global levels is occurring together with the increasing salience of local and regional levels" ("Glocalization," n.d.).

Marrakchi is eager to depict images that are constructed from a local point of view despite her global connections to France and the United States (she is married to an American film director and she resides in France). In one interview, she is quick to affirm her strong connection to Morocco when the interviewer remarks that some Moroccans view her as an outsider: "I feel I'm deeply Moroccan and anchored in my roots. I also feel very Parisian. For a long time I worried about this, thinking, 'I'm a crossbreed. What's annoying is that some Westerners expect me to be an Arab filmmaker and to focus on what is miserable, to have the same approach as the media's ... I've tried to show something else, from the inside'" (Koral, online interview). Hers is an identity in motion that breaks borders because of her on-going in-depth contact with Morocco despite her diasporic status. Marrakchi's reference to the Eurocentric and imperialist perspective of Western media and its misrepresentations of Arabs shows that she is aware of the politics of post-colonialism, a view certainly also evident in her protagonist's career as an actress in Hollywood playing terrorists. While she critiques media representations that are biased and Eurocentric, she particularly challenges the racism and sexism that are present in Hollywood. One could also say that Sophia is Marrakchi's alter ego. The film highlights their connections through their participation in Hollywood filmmaking and their marriages to American filmmakers.

Disjuncture between Global Media and Local Meanings

Rock the Casbah reflects the exchange between the global and the local cultural and sociopolitical ideologies of a new Morocco. One aspect of Marrakchi's film represents the reality of a changing, glocalized Morocco. Relatedly, another engages with Western media tropes in order to reveal to Moroccans the false representations of reality that are often depicted in Western films. Sophia's participation in Western media places her at the dis/juncture of the global and the local, between the United States and her Moroccan family. The film highlights the ruptures that she experiences as she navigates authoritarian structures both within Hollywood and Morocco. The positive aspects of Hollywood's global and international aspirations foster imagined communities, and this is initially an attractive position for women like Sophia who are in pursuit of freedom and self-fulfillment. However, type casted, the only roles she is given to play in American films are those of terrorists. She might have opted to act in some other roles if they were available, but she was assigned only stereotypical depictions. Her American lifestyle and her insistence to a travel agent at the beginning of the film that she is a Hollywood film star make it clear that she is proud of being a successful actress. Yet, American ethnic and cultural stereotyping in her roles is obvious: all Arabs are potential terrorists whose religion and values place them in opposition to American beliefs. In the aftermath of 9/11, Western media has perpetuated images of Muslim

men as terrorists and oppressors of women (Abu-Lughod, 2006, p. 7). In creating a female terrorist heroine, Marrakchi mocks a Hollywood that has continuously exaggerated a hegemonic masculinity, and a subordinate, submissive femininity. The film critiques Hollywood's stance with respect to typecasting Arabs in roles full of racist clichés, as either villains or caricatures.³

By exposing the stereotypes of Western filmmaking, Marrakchi's film deconstructs the industry's ideological messages and false representations. Sophia's Moroccan family is in shock as they watch one of the scenes in which she is strapped to a suicide bomb and about to pull the trigger, shouting "Allahu Akbar." This particular scene also shocked Moroccan audiences, who watched *Rock the Casbah* following the Casablanca and Marrakech bombings that occurred in 2003 and 2011. The film criticizes the way American media associates Islam with terrorism and portrays Muslims as suicide bombers, and how such misrepresentations affect the feelings of Moroccan audiences and generates their strong reactions. Marrakchi regards Hollywood's representations as a disjuncture between what is represented on the screen on the one hand and the reality in the local Muslim context on the other hand. Reminiscent of Canada's hit television series *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, and through the technique of film within a film, Marrakchi shows how global media images of Muslims are recreated and influence the very local context where Sophia's family is situated, as her Moroccan family now view Sophia with suspicion and ridicule. She is subjected to mockery when her sister Miriam whispers to her mom that Sophia "never does anything like normal people." Sophia's experience with her family exemplifies the cultural disjuncture that occurs when global actors (pun intended) attempt to relocate themselves in local contexts.

Anxious Border Crossings as Acts of Transgression

Sophia's mere return to Morocco provokes fear and anxiety. She is not enjoying free circulation even though she is "cosmopolitan." She has to come to terms with two ideologies, in Appadurai's framework, that represent two axes of power. The first ideoscape represents Western media (also a mediascape) which assumes a homogenous stereotype of Muslim women as terrorists. The second ideoscape is Moroccan patriarchy, which assumes that good women are submissive. Here, Marrakchi uses her international film to deal with internal issues that Moroccans do not want to discuss in public. Control of Moroccan women occurs not only overtly through controlling fathers but also covertly through mechanisms of normalization whereby women come to internalize power in abiding by norms

³ Jack Shaheen is the most outspoken critic of Hollywood's stereotypes of Arabs. He states that, "the time is long overdue for Hollywood to end its undeclared war on Arabs, and to cease misrepresenting and maligning them" (Shaheen, 2012, p. 34). Tania Kamal Al Din's 1999 documentary *Hollywood Harems* also examines Hollywood movies since the 1900s that have perpetuated stereotypes about Arabs. She looks particularly at the image of the oversexualized and exotic Arab female beauty who is rescued from the harem by a white male hero, thus adding to the corpus of race and gendered images that constitute fantasies about the orient and contribute to the homogenization of Arabs. This study is pertinent in light of continued racial profiling of Middle Easterners in the aftermath of 9/11.

and understanding themselves by way of these norms. Power is inscribed in women's bodies through their very actions and commitments to norms that render them, in the words of Foucault, "legible and docile" (Foucault, 1977/2012, pp. 187-188). According to Foucault (1977/2012), disciplinary power in the modern era is not public but rather "exercised through its invisibility" (pp. 187-188).

Entering Morocco, Sophia experiences that the border is a site of policing that exercises control of women. The border is a gendered site where women are not viewed as independent agents but only on the basis of their relationship to a man who is either a father, a brother, or a husband. Their act of crossing without a man is deemed a transgression (Macklin, 2009, p. 276). The disjuncture resulting from Sophia's movement results in a display of power by the border agent, who ignores her greeting, flirtatiously asks her to remove her glasses, and reprimands her for not carrying her Moroccan national identity card: "Even though you have a U.S. passport, you are still Moroccan." The agent also ridicules her son's name "Johnson," and makes a snide remark that her son cannot be Moroccan because his father is American. The agent's comments on her perceived cultural transgressions are interrupted by a stranger who asks him to "spare her," because her father is the boss of a famous company. Such scenes demonstrate what Moroccan feminist Fatima Mernissi (1987) means when she states that in Moroccan culture some men have the right to police women in public space (p. 82).

The viewer also senses such anxiety in the scenes in which Sophia interacts with her family. Brian Edwards argues that globalization triggers local anxieties (Edwards, 2007, p. 296). Globalization is often perceived as a threat when it comes to identity and uniqueness. This explains the schizophrenic and anxious consciousness represented in the film, where some Moroccans still want to claim "a pure culture." In one scene, Sophia's grandmother reproaches her for not teaching her son Arabic and decries that "marrying a foreigner produces little bastards." The disjuncture between the local and the global is evident here since the grandmother is open to American cultural products when she eats a hamburger from McDonald's, but objects to Sophia's marriage to an American. The circulation of American cultural products is at variance, as Appadurai would affirm, with the rejection of others (ethnoscapes). The film presents the viewer with a mixed marriage between Sophia and her American husband Johnson but, despite the tone of hope that the film sets for acceptance, conservative ideologies put a strain on their relationship. Sophia's uncle instructs her son to eat couscous with his hands the Moroccan way and accuses Sophia of being ashamed of her Arabic roots, alleging that she did not bring her American husband for fear "he would be scared off by her Arab family." Her sisters Miriam and Kenza also chastise her for trying too hard to assimilate to U.S. culture. Sophia bonds with Zakaria to escape her family's dramas, not yet realizing that he is her half-brother. Marrakchi forces the viewer to think about such disjuncture and their implications for a new Morocco. Hence the film demonstrates tensions between local traditions and the global manifestation of different cultural norms and meanings. Disjunctures become most acute when people's values are met with a counternarrative.

Glocal Disjuncture

The film portrays contradictory images of gendered and social values in contemporary Morocco. It also highlights the image of the “modern” woman as a global subject represented by Sophia who feels at home in the United States and speaks only English to her son. Initially, American culture presented a viable alternative to a local culture which Sophia views as too exclusive in its adherence to authenticity and purity. The United States offers her opportunities for freedom and self-realization that do not exist yet in her Moroccan family. The United States is also portrayed as a model of cultural hybridity and progressive notions with respect to immigration and citizenship, as the film coincides with the presidency of Barack Obama. Sophia’s sister Miriam is represented as a modern woman, who flirts openly with her doctor and expresses her sexual desire in a free, nonchalant way. Miriam’s attitude shows a disjuncture between the images perpetuated by Western media and the local realities of Moroccan women. There is also a disjuncture between the manner in which Moroccan women like Sophia and her sisters are conducting themselves in Moroccan society and the local norms regarding gender relationships. In this regard, when confronted by her sister Kenza about her entanglement with the doctor even though she is a married woman, Miriam acts as if there is nothing wrong with her behavior. Such attitude is in conflict with local norms regarding male-female relationships and interactions. Miriam might have been exposed to the idea of open relationships from Hollywood movies, which can be accessed easily in Morocco through local cable networks.

The film also shows the disjuncture between global and local values as manifested in the changes of aesthetic values. Miriam’s plastic surgery to augment her breasts shows the interplay of both patriarchy and consumer capitalism in the construction of the “modern” woman in Morocco. Global forces have influenced women in their new interest in body images and sexuality. Through Miriam’s obsession with finding the perfect body, Marrakchi suggests that Moroccan men’s preferences and global market forces dictate what Moroccan women should look like, forcing them into conformity and self-inflicted violence. While Miriam defines herself through her body, her older sister Kenza has constructed her identity in terms of her job as a schoolteacher and a stable marriage. In one scene, she is portrayed performing the Muslim prayer. As shown in the film, the different experiences of Sophia and her sisters indicate that globalization in Morocco has created heterogeneous and contradictory situations for women.

The film contrasts the roles of women in the global north with their roles in the local context. Gaining insight into the role of women in her family results in Sophia’s own self-perception of positive change for herself in the United States, and a feeling of superiority with regards to women in Morocco. She scolds Kenza for marrying her cousin and becoming a schoolteacher just to please her father. She also mocks Miriam’s plastic surgeries, challenging her to be a critical thinker instead of following latest fashions and trends: “If they all wore the veil, would you?” When her mother advises her against getting a divorce, Sophie exclaims, “So I accept everything like you? Like all the women here?” The film seems to be critical of the way Sophia has internalized Western media’s biased portrayals of

Moroccan women ignoring their lived diversity. Such patronizing attitude clearly originates from Western media's stereotypes and objectification of Moroccan women as lacking agency. Lila Abu-Lughod has written about the disjuncture between Muslim women's experiences and public attitudes in her book *Do Muslim Women Need Saving* (2013). She points out how "popular rhetoric is put to political use" (Abu-Lughod, 2013, p. 8) in the United States, where mediascapes serve also as the ideoscapes of the state, which continues to target Muslims through its discriminatory policies.

In fact, Western media's rigid representations of Moroccan women have misconstrued Moroccan women's reality. The film shows that much has changed in Moroccan culture since the 1990s. Morocco now has a new generation of Moroccan women with new ideas and more freedom. On the day of their father's funeral, the sisters do not seem to be constrained by traditional expectations of female behavior. They put scarves around their necks instead of wearing white veils as dictated by Moroccan custom. Amidst Koranic chants by the *Talba*, Miriam complains about the scars from her plastic surgery that have not healed, while Kenza lights a cigarette, expressing relief that her father who policed her is now dead. The sisters also drink American beer a few days after the funeral. The surveillance in Foucault's use of panopticon is repressive and reactionary, as if people who are watched are being punished by being watched. The deceased father in the film acts as a mischievous and positive force that actually brings the family together in the end. While in Foucault's conceptualization of the panopticon being watched is repressive, in the film it is liberating.

The attitude of the daughters towards their deceased father in the film borders on being disrespectful. This is acted out by Sophia through monologues with the corpse. Instead of crying over his death, she reads him her sister's suicide note. From Sophia's perspective, he is to blame for the incestuous relationship Leila unknowingly had with her brother Zakaria, and for her eventual suicide. As the men taking care of the body prepare to put the corpse in the refrigerator to keep it cool, Sophia remarks, "Like a side of lamb. It's what he deserves." Sophia's uncle questions her sense of respect and wonders whether "she left it in America." To Sophia, her father's double standards and hypocrisy invite such disrespect. While manifesting local Moroccan values outwardly through his clothes, Moulay Al Hassan demonstrated global values through his French speech, a sexual relationship with his maid, and his access to Western pornographic magazines. His children are unaware of the disjuncture between his reality and what he projected to the outside world. In this way, the film is critical of both local Moroccan values and Western media.

Global Imaginations

Appadurai has argued that while globalization is characterized by disjuncture "one positive force that encourages an emancipatory politics of globalization is the role of the imagination in social life" (Appadurai, 2001, p. 6). The imagination is the power through which "collective patterns of dissent emerge," since it "works across national lines to produce locality as a spatial fact and as a sensibility ... without either the predatory mobility of unregulated capital or the

predatory stability of many states” (Appadurai, 2001, p. 6). It is such “patterns of dissent” that Marrakchi might have meant during a YouTube interview when she refers to the power of Moroccan women’s transgressions in *Rock the Casbah*. In the interview, Marrakchi discusses the intersection between global and local customs and pressures in her film. She notes that *Rock the Casbah* offers an insider’s perspective on the sociopolitical reality of Moroccan society and the position of its women. Women’s transgressions during the three days of mourning following the death of the patriarchal father uncover hidden taboos and the hypocrisy of a schizophrenic society. Their transgressions also herald an interior revolution that is symbolic of another Arab spring in the making. The film does hint at the Arab revolutions as the title resonates with Robin Wright’s book *Rock the Casbah* (2011), where the author discusses the positive dynamics of change that are taking place in the Arab world in the aftermath of the Arab Spring due to social media and the power it has on people’s imaginations. Suzanne Gauch has astutely noted that the monumental ousting of Tunisian leader Zedine Ben Ali in 2011 triggered “a newly excited, mobile curiosity” (Gauch, 2016, p. 1). What clearly emerges from Marrakchi’s film is how Moroccan women are key agents able to navigate the complexities of the current glocal condition and imagine a better future.

In conclusion, the film highlights its characters’ interaction with global forces through Western media, where they undergo a disjuncture between their local context and global norms, between their lived reality and their imagined experiences. Marrakchi uses her film to critique global media, as she tries to counter the ideoscapes and mediascapes represented by the power structures of American media. In this sense, she has used globalization to critique hegemonic narratives which contribute to unease at the local level. The disjuncture stemming from globalization have forced characters to reimagine their local identities. The film suggests that an imagined glocalization has given women new identities, critically aware of both global and local forces and problems. *Rock the Casbah* is critical of how women have been marginalized in Morocco through legal and verbal violence, as evident in the scenes that hint at unequal inheritance laws. It thus challenges Moroccans to take into consideration women’s rights in reimagining the nation.

The film also departs from the rhetoric of Western anti-imperialism and from the anti-Americanism that was prevalent in earlier films of the 1980s such as Farida Benlyazid’s *Door to the Sky* (1988). While the film, at times, idealizes what is American, it also shows that Sophia has lost all sense of self, being remade in an “American” image, as she strives to be something she is not. While Sophia’s mobility has endowed her with an analytical eye in Morocco that might have allowed her to effect some change, in the United States, her assigned Hollywood role as a terrorist is indicative of her liminality and marginality. By not making a more explicit statement against racism in the United States, the film highlights the powerlessness of racialized immigrants.

Sophia is unable to emancipate herself because she is forced to choose between two competing ideologies. She either has to be a self-hating stereotype in

America or a “modern” woman in a schizophrenic Morocco. The film suggests that the transnational is not truly possible because racialized people are unable to change the West, thus demonstrating that becoming “modern” is not enough for women to escape patriarchy. Sophia was ready to leave her husband and entertain a romance with Zakaria until she found out he is her half-brother. When her husband returns from the United States at the end, she assumes her passive role as mother and wife. The film’s panoptic vision reveals the power structures present in both the local and global contexts, inspiring the viewer to imagine new identities and to be more aware of glocal possibilities.

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